

United States Department of Agriculture  
EXTENSION SERVICE

Washington, D. C.

DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS

Week of May 4, 1942

Monday - Green Grow the Vitamins. Everybody needs at least one green vegetable every day, says the guide to good diet, drawn up by the Nation's nutrition experts. Greens are the first vegetable ready for eating in the spring and some of the last vegetables ready in the fall, and a lot of them grow wild in the fields. Besides being rich in food values, the green vegetables add to the color of a meal. To preserve the fresh taste and the minerals and vitamins when cooking, green vegetables should be used as soon as possible after they come from market or garden. They should be washed quickly and thoroughly in cold water, cooked rapidly in very little if any water, and just until they are tender. Never add soda; it destroys vitamins. You can learn different good ways to use green vegetables from a new leaflet called "Green Vegetables in Low-Cost Meals," which is free as long as the supply lasts. Address your request to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Tuesday - Question Box. Food specialists of the USDA give some general rules for substituting one ingredient for another in cooking. The first is how to use sour milk in a recipe that calls for sweet milk. The answer is - use the same amount of sour milk and add half a teaspoonful of soda for each cup of sour milk. In a thin mixture omit the baking powder called for, and in a thick mixture reduce the baking powder by one-half. To use corn, cane, or maple sirup instead of white refined sugar in a recipe for cake or cookies, replace the sugar with sirup, measure for measure, then reduce the liquid the recipe calls for by one-third. In substituting fats in a recipe, use only seven-eighths of a cup of lard for each cup of butter the recipe calls for. Cooking specialists say it is possible to use other flours for part of the white flour in making baking-powder biscuits, but wheat flour contains gluten which is necessary for a light texture in the biscuits. So you need to use at least half wheat flour with any other flour, except perhaps rye.

Wednesday - Wood in Wartime. Wood experts of the USDA say every cord of wood cut and used for fuel actually releases up to a ton of coal or 200 gallons of fuel oil for wartime purposes, besides saving space on ships and railroad cars needed for transporting military supplies. Fuel wood yields more heat when seasoned for at least 6 months, and many farm woodland owners cut it about a year ahead of the time they plan to use it. Getting rid of trees that don't amount to much from a timber standpoint improves a woodland because the trees left have a better chance to develop. An extension forester says that 300,000 cords of wood go to waste in woodland in the one small State of Connecticut every year and that now is a good time to get rid of poor trees. 4-H boys in New England are learning

to chop wood and have as their slogan, "Cut a cord of wood for victory." Also now more than ever before, it is essential that we do our part to prevent woods fires. Wood in wartime goes into everything from boxes for ammunition and lumber for training camps, to construction timbers for ship-building.

Thursday - Question Box. The questions today are about the food value of strawberries, when to plant okra, dish-towel fabrics, and cow-testing work for women. Scientists say strawberries are such an excellent source of vitamin C that a medium-sized dish of them raw will furnish more than a third of a liberal day's allowance of vitamin C. And they should be served raw to get the most of the vitamin value. Next, about okra - it is about as hardy as corn and tomatoes and will grow almost anywhere you can grow those two plants. It thrives on any fertile, well-drained soil, but should not be planted until the earth is warm. To get exact planting dates for your region for okra and many other vegetables write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1673, The Farm Garden. As for dish towels, home economists say mixed fabric dish towels will last very well if given mild laundering. If rayon is one of the fabrics, less than 45 percent content will give better service than a larger amount. The last question - Why aren't women employed as cow testers in this country? Dairy specialists of the Department say they are. In a number of States women can now qualify as traveling cow testers for local dairy herd-improvement associations. Other States are starting schools to train both men and women recruits for this work.

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Week of May 11, 1942.

Monday - Conserve Your Electric Iron. Your electric iron, most used electric appliance, if properly used and cared for, will give years of efficient service. Care is now extra important because of wartime restrictions on such appliances. If moving, be sure to check on the kind of current at the new place before you plug in your iron. Thermostatically controlled irons operate on alternating current and would be ruined if plugged into direct current. Use the iron on a convenience outlet, if you can, preferably in the wall a little above the ironing board, placed so the board can be set parallel to the wall. If a light socket or drop cord is used the iron will not be hurt but may heat more slowly. The three worst things that can happen to an electric iron are overheating it, dropping it, or putting it in water. Overheating often happens when one leaves it attached while attending to something else. Form the habit of disconnecting the iron every time you leave the ironing board for any reason. To disconnect, take hold of the plug, not the cord. A fall may cause a broken connection inside the iron, injure the thermostat, or nick the sole place so the iron catches in delicate fabrics. Set your iron down firmly on a stand or on its heel. See that the cord is not stretched across a space where people must pass. Never put an electric iron into water, because of the heating element inside. To clean, disconnect and let cool, then wipe with a damp cloth. Rub off starch spots with a damp cloth and very mild scouring powder. Once a month, while the iron is still warm, wax it with paraffin or beeswax. Wipe off any excess wax with soft paper or cloth.

Tuesday - Question Box. A gardener asks whether it pays to prune and stake tomatoes. Plant scientists of USDA give five reasons---to save space, as plants can be set 2 feet apart; cultivation is easier; tomatoes are cleaner because they are off the ground; they ripen earlier; they get more sunshine and are richer in vitamin C according to a report from the Utah Experiment Station. Any stakes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and 4 or 5 feet long will answer. Prune by pinching out the side shoots as they appear where the leaf joins the main stalk. Fruit clusters appear on the opposite side of the stem and, of course, are not removed. Tie plants to stakes with soft twine or strips of old cotton goods, loosely, below a leaf.

To protect garden shoes, leather experts of the USDA say, keep them well greased or oiled. For greasing, use neat's-foot oil or cod or castor oil, tallow or wool grease, or combinations. Brush off all dust or mud, soles as well as uppers. Apply warm oil with a flannel cloth, rubbing oil in with palm of hand. See that grease soaks in well where sole is fastened on the upper. Let the greased shoes dry in a warm place.

Home canners ask about canning fruit with juice instead of sugar sirup. Suggest sorting out the riper, juicier, sweeter fruit to heat and strain for juice - firmer pieces, to pack in jar. Heat softer portion at low temperature just enough to bring out the juice, strain and heat juice to simmering temperature, pour over firmer portions packed in jars; process by usual method. Another way is to cook all the fruit a few minutes, then pack hot in hot sterilized jars, and process. Fruit packed hot this way does not hold shape so well but gives off more juice.

To a housewife looking for new ways to cook beans, greens, and other green vegetables, the answer is---a new leaflet just published by the USDA, called "Green Vegetables in Low-Cost Diets."

Wednesday - Spring Chicken Notes. Though now available any time of year, young chickens still are most plentiful in spring. Two rules for cooking chicken: Cook at moderate heat so the meat will be juicy, tender, and done evenly all the way through; and vary your cooking method according to age and fatness of the bird. Good ways to cook young, well-fatted birds are broiling, frying, or roasting in an open pan. Very lean young birds are best cooked in a covered roaster or casserole. Covered cooking is also the best method for full-grown birds past their prime for roasting but not yet in the stewing class. Very old birds need long, slow cooking until tender; then you can use them in a chicken fricassee, creamed chicken, or many other chicken dishes, hot or cold. Smoked poultry is drier than other poultry, so needs special care in cooking. To fry chicken, disjoint and cut into pieces the right size for serving. Wipe as dry as possible, season with salt and pepper and roll in flour (or dip in egg and milk and then roll in fine dry bread crumbs or corn meal). Have ready a thick frying pan with a half inch or more of hot--but not smoking--fat. Put the thickest pieces of chicken in first, cover, cook at moderate heat, turning when brown. Thick pieces of a 3-pound chicken usually need 20 to 25 minutes. To fry chicken in deep fat, dip the pieces in egg and bread crumbs, let them dry, put, piece by piece, into a deep kettle with fat heated to  $350^{\circ}$ , enough of it to cover the chicken without overflowing the kettle. Regulate the temperature to fry at  $300^{\circ}$  to  $325^{\circ}$  F. A quarter of a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -pound dressed chicken takes 10 to 15 minutes to cook done in deep fat of this temperature. A bulletin on poultry cooking, F.B. 1888, published by the USDA, is available as long as the supply lasts.

Thursday - Question Box. To the question, "Is it true the Government has regulated the length of women's dresses?" the answer is--Yes, as far as manufacturers are concerned. The War Production Board has issued regulations for simplification of woolen dresses, suits, and coats now being made for next fall and winter, but not applying to clothes you see now. The rules are intended to save materials and will cause no real hardship. For example, length of a size 16 dress is to be 43 inches from neck to hem but a 2-inch hem is permitted, which can be let out if necessary. Other parts of garments to have less cloth are sleeves, pockets, and skirt width. The WPB expects the simpler styles to save about 100 million yards of cloth a year. No restrictions are placed on summer fabrics until this year's production is completed and on the way to consumers. None of the regulations apply to the woman who sews at home, but she'll probably follow current styles. You may see a gradual shift from styles that require metal fasteners to those having buttons and buttonholes, ties of the dress fabric, or no fastenings at all.

Next, a canning question, "Can one use one's tin cans again for this season's canning by reflanging them at home?" Specialists say it is not desirable to reflare tin cans at home as it takes special equipment few people have. Better consult your county extension agent or manager of your community center. A homemaker asks if weevils found in loose rice in a tin canister might spread in the pantry. Yes, say the entomologists, who suggest that she scald the tin container thoroughly and go over the pantry shelves with a stiff brush and soap and water to remove bits of flour, cereal, or dust. Cereal beetles or weevils can live a long time on very small quantities of dry cereal. Don't keep much on hand in hot weather. Dry cereals can be sterilized by spreading them thin in pans and heating in the oven until they reach  $125^{\circ}$  F.

United States Department of Agriculture  
E X T E N S I O N   S E R V I C E  
Washington, D. C.

DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS  
Week of May 18, 1942

Monday - Cotton Supplies in Wartime. It is particularly important now that we buy carefully the cotton clothes and household items we need, and take care of the fabrics we already have by careful laundering and prompt mending. The amount of cotton normally used in homes in the United States is enormous, and right now there is another important customer - the Government. The Army makes use of cotton fabrics such as awning material - used in tents of all kinds; canvas for basins, buckets, haversacks, and for covering many kinds of equipment; cotton for sheets, summer suits, nurses' uniforms, ski suits, raincoats, mattresses, and other purposes. No matter what the cost, the Army and Navy must have enough cotton for their needs, and it is up to civilians to take care of the cotton we have.

Tuesday - Question Box. A young gardener wants to know just where and how to use "summer mulches." They are coverings for the soil between the rows of vegetables. They help keep the soil moist and cool and keep down weeds. They may be of straw, paper, or dried grass clippings. Put them on when the summer weather gets warm and dry. Another gardener asks for pointers on tomato plants. Tomatoes need full sun most of the day, rich soil, but not too much nitrogen in the soil. A tip from a gardener from a part of the country that is dry and windy - if you plant tomato and cabbage seed in the garden, dig a hole in moist dirt, drop seed in, cover lightly, then put a stone on it to hold the soil and keep in moisture. About the third day, lay the rock north of the plant to reflect heat, and put a little dirt near the plant. And a question about using fertilizer during the growing season. If the ground is well prepared and well fertilized before planting, adding fertilizer between the rows during growing season is not necessary, but, if the soil is light and there has been too much rain, it often pays to do so.

Wednesday - Price Ceilings. Price ceilings were posted in stores last Monday, and now it is up to you to hold these to stop inflation. A price ceiling is the highest price any seller may charge you and, according to law no seller may charge you more than the highest price he charged for most of his goods and services during March 1942. The ceilings may vary from store to store, and the seller may charge less but never more than his ceiling. This affects most products that are processed or manufactured, but most raw foods have no ceilings. Price ceilings affect clothing, rents, and other things, too, so learn price regulations and how they operate, and know when and where, and in what detail to report violations. Remember that you have a personal responsibility to buy only at or below the ceiling price.

Thursday - Question Box. Wartime economies are leading homemakers to ask questions about saving what they have. The first question is from a city householder in regard to the advisability of her doing canning. The home economists say by all means help save food. Whatever you can for your family to use next winter, or buy to eat fresh during the season, takes the pressure off commercial supplies. A mother asks what to fix instead of cookies to go with the children's after-school glass of milk. Fruit in season is good, or small sandwiches that are different from regular school-lunch sandwiches. Another question is about slip-cover patterns. You can buy them, but it is easier to make your own than to alter a commercial pattern to fit your chair. Write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1873, "Slip Covers for Furniture," which tells you how to pin the cover together right on the chair.

DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS

Week of May 25, 1942

Monday - Protect Children From Fire and Burns. It is not enough to make a home safe by proper construction and fire-protection apparatus. Every member of the family should be trained to observe ordinary precautions against fire, and occasional family fire drills might be held to teach everyone what to do and where to go if a fire occurs. Teach children not to touch matches and keep them out of the child's reach; use strong screens in front of open fire; keep portable oil heaters in good condition; see that cloths and wood boxes are not too near a hot stove; never leave the electric iron connected. Now that the children are collecting waste paper, see that it is kept in a safe place. Check your basement for fire hazards and also check the basement of the school. Many bad fires start there.

Tuesday - Question Box. The answer to the question of how much sugar you need for health is - None. Sugar supplies fuel or energy which fortunately is supplied by many other foods as well, such as cereals, bread, potatoes, fat, and other familiar foods. A bulletin on cooking poultry published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture answers the next question, How to make soup of chicken bones. Use bony parts or left-over chicken bones. Put pieces on rack in a kettle, cover with water. Add an onion, chopped, one or two bay leaves, salt to taste, and celery leaves and stalks. Simmer until meat drops from the bone, strain the broth and chill it. Skim off the fat. Another question: Whether chicken liver that has yellowish-green streaks in it should be thrown away? Poultry cooking experts say to cut out any green streaks on the liver before cooking. The rest of the liver can be cooked. ....A housewife wants to know what kind of fruit to set out if spraying is not practicable. Scientists suggest, in this case, small fruits - strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, sour cherries, grapes and plums, or native wild fruits..... The last question, How can I remove hard-water stains on a porcelain enamel tub without harming the enamel? Use a mixture of kerosene oil and powdered whiting. Or use a cleaner containing trisodium phosphate--never a harsh gritty cleaner.

Wednesday - Weeds and Water. Victory gardeners have two important matters to consider this month--weeds and water. Hoeing or cultivating once a week should be enough to keep ahead of the weeds. This is important since weeds draw heavily on the moisture in the soil and also harbor disease and insect pests. Whether it pays to water your garden or leave it to rainfall depends on where you live and on your water supply. Irrigation is necessary in dry parts of the country. In parts that have rainfall during the growing season, watering can bring the crops on early. If you have no running water, then you will be wise to water only very tender crops or newly set plants. The right kind of watering is soaking the soil to a depth of 4 or 5 inches about once a week. Where there is no convenient water supply for the garden, then save all possible moisture by keeping down weeds, keeping the ground well cultivated, and using mulch where you can.

Thursday - Question Box. The first inquiry is from a housewife who asks, "Do vegetables keep better stored all together in one big outdoor pit, or each kind stored separately in smaller pits?" Vegetables keep equally

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well stored either way, but once the pit is open all the contents should be removed to prevent freezing. So, for convenience, it is better to store in small amounts and put a variety of vegetables in each pit..... Another question: "What care should be given pot-grown chrysanthemums, raised from cuttings and planted along the edge of the garden, to make them bloom well?" When the plant is established, remove the growing tip to make it branch out. Three to five shoots will appear and should be stopped in turn. Do not pinch out the tops after the middle of July, or the blooms may come too late in the fall.... To bring honey back to liquid form after it crystallizes, set the jar of honey in moderately hot water, not over 140 degrees, for a few minutes.... To keep blankets through the summer, store them in a reasonably tight trunk or box and keep tightly closed. Scatter naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene flakes or crystals between the blankets. If winter rugs are replaced by summer ones, see that they are clean and wrapped and sealed to keep out moths, or store them with a rug cleaner.